

The Mahayana Path of Preparation and Buddha Nature

The topics of this year's spring course are: (1) the Mahayana path of preparation and (2) Buddha Nature. These two topics are set forth in Maitreya's ***Ornament for Clear Realization*** and thus pertain to the study of **Prajnaparamita** (Tib.: **Pharchin**, Engl.: **Perfection of Wisdom**). **Prajnaparamita** is the first of the five main topics or fields of study of Buddhist philosophy. The five topics are listed below.

The presentation of the (1) Mahayana path of preparation and (2) Buddha Nature is preceded by a short introduction and a summary of the verses of the ***Ornament for Clear Realization*** (also called: ***Ornament***) we discussed during previous courses.

THE THREE WHEELS OF DHARMA

After the Buddha attained enlightenment, he spent the remaining 45 years of his life travelling across the Indian subcontinent turning the *Wheel of Dharma*, i.e. explaining and disseminating what he had come to realize. There are 84,000 collections of discourses taught by the Buddha according to the diverse dispositions, inclinations and interests of his disciples.

Among the different ways in which those teachings are classified, one of the most common is the classification into the *Three Wheels of Dharma*.

The convention of the three wheels is an attempt to categorize the content and philosophical views of the large array of Buddhist teachings and there are different ways in which to classify the discourses into three wheels. One is from the point of view of time. The time from the Buddha's enlightenment until his passing away can be divided into three periods. The teachings the Buddha gave during the initial period fall into the category of the first wheel, the teachings he gave during the intermediate period fall into the category of the second wheel, and the teachings he gave during the later period fall into the category of the third wheel. An example of a discourse that pertains to the first wheel is the ***Sutra on the Four Noble Truths*** (Skt.: ***Catvari aryasatyani sutra***, Tib.: ***'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi'i mdo***) that the Buddha gave in the Sarnath deer park near Varanasi to his first five disciples, shortly after his enlightenment. Another example is the teaching in which the Buddha explains to the first five disciples that the lower part of the monastic robes (Tib.: *sham thabs*) should be worn in a circular fashion. This discourse is from the ***Minor Teachings [of the Vinaya]*** (Tib.: ***lung phran tshegs***), which is one of the ***Four Texts on the Vinaya*** (Tib.: ***'dul ba lung sde bzhi***) taught by the Buddha.

Examples of discourses that pertain to the second wheel are the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** given on Vulture Peak Mountain in Rajghir. And examples of teachings that pertain to the third wheel are the ***Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata*** (Skt.: ***Tathagathagarbha Sutra***, Tib.: ***de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i mdo***) and the ***Condensed Vinaya*** (Tib.: ***'dul ba mdor bsdus***). The ***Condensed Vinaya*** is also one of the discourses from the ***Minor Teachings [of the Vinaya]***.

Another way to classify the Buddha's teachings into three wheels is from the point of view the subject-matter, or more precisely, from the point of view of teaching selflessness. It derives from the ***Sutra Unraveling the Thought*** (Skt.: ***Samdhinirmocana sutra***, Tib.: ***dgongs pa nges par 'grel ba'i mdo***) and does not include all the discourses. For instance, it does not include the teaching in which the Buddha explains that the lower part of the monastic robes should be worn in a circular fashion.

The three wheels according to the ***Sutra Unraveling the Thought*** are:

The first wheel

The first wheel constitutes Hinayana (Theravada/Fundamental Vehicle) teachings and refers to the Buddha's first discourse, the ***Sutra on the Four Noble Truths*** (Skt.: ***Catvari aryasatyani sutra***, Tib.: ***'phags pa'i bden pa bzhi'i mdo***).

Therefore, the principal disciples of the ***Sutra on the Four Noble Truths*** are Hinayana practitioners, i.e. practitioners who mainly aspire to attain self-liberation. However, it is important to understand that those Hinayana practitioners (who are the principal disciples of the first wheel) are followers of different philosophical tenet systems. Some are followers of the Vaibashika (the Great Exposition School), some of

the Sautrantika (the Sutra School), and some of the Prasangika Madhyamika (the Middle Way Consequentialist School). Hence, in the first wheel the Buddha not only sets forth the four noble truths but also literally teaches Hinayana practitioners who are proponents of the Vaibashika and Sautantrika that the five aggregates, the eighteen constituents, the twelve sense-spheres, the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment, and so forth exist truly. At the same time, he teaches Hinayana practitioners who are followers of the Prasangika Madhyamika that phenomena *lack* true existence.

This ability to simultaneously teach opposing concepts (such as true existence and the *lack* of true existence) in accordance with the different interests, predispositions, and needs of his disciples is explained to be one of the unique qualities of a Buddha.

Sutras that teach related subject matter and therefore pertain to the category of the first wheel are:

1. The ***Sutra of the Close Placement of Mindfulness on the Sacred Dharmas*** (Skt.: *Saddharma smṛtyupashthana sutra*, Tib.: *dam pa'i chos dran pa nyer bzhag gi mdo*)
2. ***Hundreds of Karmic Deeds*** (Skt.: *Karmashataka Sutra*, Tib.: *las brgya pa*)
3. ***Hundreds of Accounts of Realizations*** (Skt.: *Avadanashataka Sutras*, Tib.: *rtogs brjod brgya pa*)
4. ***The Scriptural Texts of the Rules of Discipline*** (Skt.: *Vinayagama*, Tib.: *'dul ba'i lung shes che ba*).

Even though these four sutras pertain to the first wheel, they are not referred to as the first wheel.

The second wheel

The second wheel constitutes Mahayana (Universal Vehicle) teachings and refers to the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras***. They explicitly teach the ultimate truth, that is, the lack of true existence, and implicitly the meditational paths that lead to full enlightenment.

Since they teach related subject matter, the following sutras pertain to the category of the second wheel (though they are not referred to as the second wheel):

1. The ***Descent into Lanka Sutra*** (Skt.: *Lankavatara Sutra*, Tib.: *lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo*),
2. The ***King of Concentration Sutra*** (Skt.: *Samadhiraja Sutra*, Tib.: *ting nge 'dzin rgyal po'i mdo*),
3. The ***Sutra of the Ten Bhumis*** (Skt.: *Dashabhumika Sutra*, Tib.: *mdo sde sa bcu pa*),
4. The ***Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata*** (Skt.: *Tathagathagarbha Sutra*, Tib.: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i mdo*),
5. The ***Sutra Requested by the Arya Shrimala*** (Skt.: *Aryashrimala Pariprccha Sutra*, Tib.: *'phags pa dpal 'phreng gi mdo*),
6. The ***Sutra of the Ornament for the Illumination of Primordial Wisdom*** (Skt.: *Jñanaloka Alamkara Sutra*, Tib.: *Ye shes snang ba'i rgyan gyi mdo*),
7. The ***Sutra of the Great Nirvana*** (Skt.: *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, Tib.: *mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo*)
8. The ***Sutra of the Question of Dharanishvararaja*** (Skt.: *Dharanishvararajapariprccha*, Tib.: *gzungs kyi dbang phyug rgyal pos zhug pa*)

The third wheel

The third wheel is also from the point of view of the Mahayana and refers to the seventh chapter of the ***Sutra Unravelling the Thought***, called ***Questions by Paramartha Samudgata*** (Skt.: *Paramartha Samudgata Pariprccha*, Tib.: *don dam yang dag 'phags kyis zhug pa*).

In the seventh chapter of this sutra, the Bodhisattva Paramartha Samudgata asks the Buddha what he had in mind when during the first wheel he said that the five aggregates, etc. exist truly and during the second wheel that they do not, for if taken literally, these two statements appear to be contradictory. Since the Buddha was aware that the principal disciples present at the time of Paramartha Samudgata's question were suitable vessels for the Chittamatra (Mind-Only) tenets, he replied by explaining that phenomena can be divided into those phenomena that exist truly and those that do not. With this explanation the Buddha presented the philosophical system of the Chittamatra, whose proponents assert that impermanent phenomena and emptiness exist truly, whereas permanent phenomena other than emptiness do not.

The remaining nine chapters of the ***Sutra Unravelling the Thought*** pertain to the category of the third wheel (but are not referred to as the third wheel).

Please note that the ***Sutra Unravelling the Thought*** has ten chapters containing questions put by nine Bodhisattvas and one Hearer (Subhuti). In the first chapter a Bodhisattva replies, whereas in the remaining chapters the reply is given by the Buddha. The Sutra was taught in Vaishali.

Even though the ***Sutra on the Essence of the Tathagata*** (Skt.: ***Tathagathagarbha Sutra***, Tib.: ***de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'i mdo***) is described as pertaining to the category of the second wheel, according to the categorization of the discourses of the Buddha into three wheels from the point of view of teaching selflessness, it is one of the sutras of the third wheel from the point of view of time.

Please note that both the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** and the ***Sutra of the Essence of the Tathagata*** present Buddha nature. In the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** the Buddha describes mainly the objective Buddha Nature - also called the objective clear light - which refers to the ultimate truth of emptiness. On the other hand, later in the ***Sutra of the Essence of the Tathagata*** the Buddha additionally teaches the subjective Buddha Nature (the clear light nature of the mind). This sutra is therefore regarded as a bridge between the Sutric and the Tantric teachings.

This concludes a brief description of the three wheels.

Of the three wheels, the teachings of the second wheel, the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras***, are the principal genre of teachings relied upon for the study of Buddhist philosophy according to the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism.

These sutras flourish in many countries, including China - from where they were taken to Japan, Korea and Vietnam - and Tibet, from where they were transmitted to Mongolia, the trans-Himalayan region and areas within the Russian Federation.

The ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** are also called 'Sutras of the Sublime Mother'. Here, 'Sublime Mother' refers to Prajna-Paramita, the female Buddha figure that represents wisdom.

Wisdom is called 'Sublime Mother' because like a mother gives birth to her children, wisdom gives birth to all Arya beings (i.e. those who have directly realized the ultimate nature of reality, emptiness) and to their attainment of liberation and Buddhahood.

There are many different ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** of various lengths. Seventeen were translated into Tibetan, one of them being the ***Heart Sutra***. These seventeen are collectively called the ***Seventeen Mother and Son Sutras*** and they consist of six 'Mother Sutras' and eleven 'Son Sutras'.

The ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** explicitly teach emptiness and implicitly or in a hidden fashion the meditational paths leading to enlightenment. Nagarjuna in his ***Six Compendia of Reasoning*** expounds on the explicit meaning of the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** and Maitreya in his ***Ornament for Clear Realizations*** expounds on the implicit meaning of the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras***. The text we are studying here is Maitreya's text.

As mentioned above, the main genre of teachings relied upon for the study of Buddhist philosophy according to the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism is the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras***. Since Tibetan Buddhism is based on the Nalanda tradition, students of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition also rely chiefly on these sutras.

In general, the different topics of Buddhist philosophy that are studied and debated in Tibetan monastic institutions can be summarized into what are called the ***Five Volumes of the Great Texts*** (Tib.: ***gzhung chen bka' pod lnga***), which basically refer to five different topics or fields of study:

- **Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom, Tib.: shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa/ phar phyin)**
- **Madhyamika (Middle Way, Tib.: dbu ma)**
- **Pramana (Logic/epistemology, Tib.: tshad ma)**
- **Abhidharma (Phenomenology, Tib.: mngon pa mdzod)**
- **Vinaya (Discipline, Tib.: 'dul ba)**

The foundation of these five topics is the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras***. The study of **Prajnaparamita** (or **Pharchin**) entails the study of the implicit meaning of the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*** and thus the study of the meditational paths that lead practitioners to the enlightenment of a Buddha.

The study of the **Madhyamika** entails the study of the explicit meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, i.e. of the ultimate nature of emptiness, the direct realization of which is vital to attaining Buddhahood. The study of **Pramana** (or **Logic**) entails the study of the methods of analysis which are an essential tool for comprehending the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. The study of **Abhidharma** entails the study of different classifications of reality that are central to the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. And the study of **Vinaya** represents the moral conduct by which practitioners of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** should abide.

Furthermore, by studying the five topics one also gains an understanding of the four philosophical tenet systems (Vaibashika, Sautrantika, etc.). The reason for this is that the main text used for the study of **Abhidharma** is Vasubhandu's **Abhidharmakosha**, which teaches Vaibashika (Great Exposition School) and Sautrantika (Sutra School) tenets. The main text that is used for the study of **Pramana** is Dharmakirti's **Pramanavartika**, which is from the point of view of the Chittamatra (Mind-Only School). The main text that is used for the study of the **Prajnaparamita** is Maitreya's **Ornament for Clear Realizations** which is traditionally presented from the perspective of the Svatantrika Madhyamika (Middle Way Autonomy School). And the main text that is used for the study of **Madhyamika** is Chandrakirti's **Supplement to the Middle Way**, which teaches the Prasangika Madhyamika (Middle Way Consequentialist School).

The reason for traditionally presenting the topic of the **Prajnaparamita** from the point of view of the Svatantrika Madhyamika (although Maitreya actually taught the **Ornament of Clear Realizations** from the point of view of the Prasangika Madhyamika) is that the majority of the authors of the most important Indian commentaries on Maitreya's **Ornament for Clear Realizations** were proponents of the Svatantrika Madhyamika.

Furthermore, there are two sub schools of the Svatantrika Madhyamika:

- (1) Yogachara Svatantrika (Yogic Autonomy School, Tib.: *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa*)
- (2) Sautrantika Svatantrika (Sutric Autonomy School, Tib.: *mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa*)

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** is usually presented from the point of view of the Yogachara Svatantrika since Shantarakshita and Haribhadra are both followers of this philosophical tenet system. The philosophical viewpoint Tibetan Buddhist students follow when they study the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** is determined by the philosophical viewpoint of these two Indian masters, for Shantarakshita introduced the teachings of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutra** and the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** in Tibet while Haribhadra's **Commentary Clarifying the Meaning** is the most prominent Indian commentary on the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Haribhadra was also Shantarakshita's disciple.

However, the explanations given here in this course are from the point of view of the Prasangika Madhyamika (Middle Way Consequentialist) School, the highest philosophical tenet system. The reason is that Western students of philosophy usually are more familiar with this tenet school, and since the different topics of the **Prajnaparamita** are very extensive and complicated, it may be better to avoid creating more confusion by presenting them from the point of view of the Yogachara Svatantrika. Nonetheless, whenever there are major differences between the two schools, they will be pointed out.

THE ORNAMENT FOR CLEAR REALIZATIONS

The **Ornament for Clear Realizations** (Skt.: *Abisamayaalamkara*, Tib.: *mngon rtogs rgyan*) - abbreviated as the '**Ornament**' - is one of five treatises revealed to Asanga in the Tushita pure realm by the future Buddha Maitreya. As mentioned above, it is a commentary on the implicit or hidden meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, and thus describes the different meditative stages and awarenesses required to become a fully awakened Buddha, from the generation of Bodhicitta until the attainment of the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

Even though the **Ornament** is a commentary of all the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, its principal sutric sources (Tib.: *bshad bya rtsa ba'i mdo*) are three:

1. [The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in] **One Hundred Thousand** [Verses] (Tib.: *'bum*)
2. [The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in] **Twenty Thousand** [Verses] (Tib.: *nyi khri*)
3. [The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in] **Eight Thousand** [Verses] (Tib.: *brgyas stong pa*)

Owing to their different lengths, the three principal sutric sources of the **Ornament** are commonly also known as the 'extensive, middling, and short Sublime Mothers'.

Furthermore, there are twenty-two Indian commentaries on the **Ornament** that were deemed most important and were therefore translated into Tibetan. These commentaries are also commentaries on the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. However, some of them correlate the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** with the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** (twelve commentaries) and some do not (nine commentaries).

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the most popular of the twenty-two Indian commentaries are Arya Vimuktisena's commentary *Illuminating the [Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in] Twenty-Thousand [Verses]* (Skt. *Abhisamayalamkaravrtti*, Tib.: *nyi khri snang ba*) as well as Haribhadra's *Commentary Clarifying the Meaning* (Skt.: *Sphuṭārtha*, Tib.: *'grel pa don gsal*). Of these two, Haribhadra's commentary is the most prominent and studied most extensively, for it is a relatively short text that clearly presents the meaning of the **Ornament** and indicates that the **Ornament** is an 'ornament' for all three principal sutric sources.

The **Ornament** has eight chapters and each chapter presents one 'clear realization' (Tib.: *mngon par rtogs pa*). A clear realization refers to a path consciousness. Hence the five Hinayana and the five Mahayana paths (Mahayana path of accumulation, preparation, etc.) are all clear realizations.

The eight clear realizations presented in the **Ornament** are:

1. Exalted Knower of Aspects (i.e. the omniscient mind of a Buddha) (Tib.: *rnam mkhyen*)
2. Knower of Paths (Tib.: *lam shes*)
3. Knower of Bases (Tib.: *gzhi shes*)
4. Training in Complete Aspects (Tib.: *rnam rdzogs sbyor ba*)
5. Peak Training (Tib.: *rtse mo'i sbyor ba*)
6. Gradual Training (Tib.: *mthar gyis sbyor ba*)
7. Training in a Single Instant (Tib.: *skad cig ma'i sbyor ba*)
8. Resultant Dharmakaya (Tib.: *'bras bu chos sku*)

Among the eight clear realizations, the principal clear realizations are the first three, called the 'three knowers'. They are explained below.

As mentioned above, each chapter of the Ornament presents one clear realization. The way it presents these eight is by way of presenting other phenomena or topics that characterize the eight. For example, the first clear realization, the exalted knower of aspects, is characterized by ten topics.

Therefore:

The **first** chapter explains the **exalted knower of aspects** by way of **ten** topics.

The **second** chapter explains the **knower of paths** by way of **eleven** topics.

The **third** chapter explains the **knower of bases** by way of **nine** topics.

The **fourth** chapter explains the **training in complete aspects** by way of **eleven** topics.

The **fifth** chapter explains the **peak training** by way of **eight** topics.

The **sixth** chapter explains the **gradual training** by way of **thirteen** topics.

The **seventh** chapter explains the **training in a single instant** by way of **four** topics.

The **eighth** chapter explains the **resultant dharmakaya** by way of **four** topics.

In total the **Ornament** expounds on **seventy** different topics which is why the **Ornament** is commonly described as a treatise that presents the implicit or hidden meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** by way of *eight clear realizations* and *seventy topics*.

THE NAME OF THE TEXT

The Tibetan translation of the **Ornament** starts by citing the **Ornament's** full name in Sanskrit, the language in which Maitreya originally taught the text:

In Sanskrit: Abhisamayalamkara nama prajnaparamita upadesha shastra karika

Traditionally Tibetan translators (who translated the Buddhist sutras, tantras and treatises from Sanskrit into Tibetan) would add the original title in Sanskrit to their translations. The reason for this was to demonstrate the authenticity of the texts and to indicate that the original was in Sanskrit. Another

reason was to leave imprints in the continuums of students of these texts since all founding Buddhas of the past, present, and future are said to teach in Sanskrit. Hence, unless one attains enlightenment before the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya, etc., imprints of the Sanskrit language will be beneficial when receiving teachings from him and other founding Buddhas in the future.

Furthermore, by reading or hearing the title in Sanskrit, students will remember the great kindness of the Tibetan translators who underwent immense hardships while traveling to India, learning Sanskrit, receiving teachings, translating the Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan, and making them available in Tibet. Without their inconceivable effort and sacrifice we would not have access to most of these teachings nowadays.

The title in Sanskrit is followed by the citation of the full name in Tibetan:

In Tibetan: Shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan zhes bya ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa

The meaning of the words in Sanskrit is:

Abhisamaya - clear realization, *alamkara* - ornament, *nama* - called, *prajnaparamita* - perfection of wisdom, *upadesha* - quintessential instruction, *shastra* - treatise, *karika* - verses and chapters

The meaning of the words in Tibetan is:

Shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa - perfection of wisdom, *man ngag* - quintessential instruction, *bstan bcos* - treatise, *mngon par rtogs pa* - clear realization, *rgyan* - ornament, *zhes bya ba* - called, *tshig le'ur byas pa* - verses and chapters

Therefore, the full title of the *Ornament* in English is:

The Verses and Chapters of what is Called the 'Ornament for Clear Realizations', a Quintessential Instruction Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom

In general, the **perfection of wisdom** can be categorized into three: (1) the textual perfection of wisdom (Tib. *gzhung sher phyin*), (2) the path (causal) perfection of wisdom (Tib.: *lam sher phyin*), and (3) the resultant perfection of wisdom (Tib. *'bras bu'i sher phyin*). Among the three, the resultant perfection of wisdom constitutes the *actual* perfection of wisdom, for it refers to the omniscient mind of a Buddha. The other two are merely called 'perfection of wisdom' because they serve as the causes of the actual perfection of wisdom. The textual perfection of wisdom refers to the Buddha's teachings that chiefly teach either Mahayana paths or Mahayana results. Examples of the textual perfection of wisdom are the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**. The path (causal) perfection of wisdom refers to the path consciousnesses in the continuums of Bodhisattvas. Hence, by listening, contemplating, and meditating on the textual perfection of wisdom, practitioners cultivate the path (causal) perfection of wisdom, which eventually evolves into the resultant perfection of wisdom, i.e. the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

A **quintessential instruction treatise** is a commentary which in a few words gives the core insight into a whole topic. Thus, Maitreya describes the **Ornament** as a treatise which conveys the essential meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** in very precise terms, enabling students of the **Ornament** to easily understand the meaning of these sutras.

As mentioned above, a **clear realization** refers to a path consciousness. The etymology of the Tibetan term for clear realization (*mngon rtogs*) is *mgon du pyhogs pa*, which means 'to move in the direction', or *mngon sum du rtogs pa*, which means 'to realize directly'. Hence, a path consciousness moves practitioners in the direction of liberation and Buddhahood by cultivating the direct realization of the ultimate nature of phenomena.

An **ornament** is explained to be of three types: (1) a natural ornament, (2) a beautifying ornament, and (3) a clarifying ornament. A natural ornament refers to a naturally beautiful phenomenon, such as the beautiful physique of a woman. A beautifying ornament refers to the decoration that accentuates or highlights the natural beauty of the phenomenon, such as the jewels the beautiful woman wears. And the clarifying ornament refers to that which clearly shows or reflects the beauty of the phenomenon, such as a mirror that clearly reflects the woman's beauty.

The **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** are likened to a natural ornament; the eight clear realizations and the seventy topics to a beautifying ornament; and the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** to a clarifying ornament.

Hence, the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** is explained to be like a clarifying ornament or a mirror in that it reflects or clarifies the whole meaning of the natural ornament, the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**, by way of presenting the sutras' beautifying ornament, the eight clear realizations and seventy topics. And just as someone experiences pleasure when perceiving the mirror reflection of a beautiful woman adorned with jewels, likewise, the wise ones are said to experience pleasure when studying the **Ornament for Clear Realizations** which clarifies the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** that are adorned with, i.e. that teach, the eight clear realizations and the seventy topics.

The **verses and chapters** refer to the eight chapters of the Ornament, which are composed in verse.

HOMAGE BY THE TRANSLATORS

The full title of the **Ornament** is followed by the line of homage given by the Tibetan translators:

I prostrate to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

The homage by the translators is not actually part of the **Ornament** taught by Maitreya but was added later. The Tibetan translators pay homage to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in order to remove obstacles that prevent the accomplishment of temporary goals (such as successfully translating the text) and the ultimate goal of attaining liberation and full enlightenment.

Additionally, the homage reveals the principal subject matter of the text to the reader. Following a decree passed by a former Tibetan king, many Tibetan translators traditionally pay homage to particular entities in order to indicate which of the three trainings is the principal subject matter of the text:

- a) When the principal subject matter of the text is ethics/morality, the translators pay homage to the omniscient mind of a Buddha.
- b) When the principal subject matter is meditational paths/concentrations, they pay homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
- c) And when the principal subject matter is wisdom, they pay homage to Manjushri.

Therefore, since the principal subject matter of the **Ornament** is meditational paths, the translators pay homage to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

THE HOMAGE OF THE ORNAMENT

The actual **Ornament** begins with Maitreya first paying homage and then explaining the purpose for composing the text.

Regarding the four lines of the homage, in the first line (which is the fourth line in the Tibetan text) Maitreya pays homage to the perfection of wisdom (the textual, path, and resultant perfection of wisdom) by way of describing it as the 'Sublime Mother' of the four types of Aryas, i.e. of Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, Arya Bodhisattvas, and Arya Buddhas - although Arya Solitary Realizers are not explicitly mentioned.

In the remaining three lines he pays homage to the three knowers (Tib.: *mkhyen pa gsum*) by revealing their different qualities. And since the eight clear realizations are subsumed under the three knowers, Maitreya also implicitly pays homage to the eight clear realizations.

The purpose for composing the homage is to instill faith in the three knowers and their qualities in the mental continuums of students of the **Ornament**. In turn, the purpose of such faith is to cause students to listen, contemplate, and meditate on the **Ornament** and ultimately to attain liberation and Buddhahood.

*I prostrate to the Sublime Mother of Buddhas and of the assembly of Hearers and Bodhisattvas
Who through the **knower of bases** leads Hearers seeking pacification to complete peace;
Who through the **knower of paths** causes those benefitting migrators to achieve the aims of the world;
And who through possession of which (i.e. through possession of the **exalted knower of aspects/**
the omniscient mind) the Subduers set forth the varieties having all aspects. [1]*

The meaning of the verse of homage is:

- [1] I, Maitreya, **prostrate to the Sublime Mother of Arya Buddhas and of the assembly of Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, and Arya Bodhisattvas,**

Who through the knower of bases leads Arya Hearers and Arya Solitary Realizers **seeking pacification** from Samsara **to the complete peace** of self-liberation,
Who through the knower of paths enables or **causes those** Arya Bodhisattvas who are **benefitting migrator** sentient beings **to achieve the aim of the world**, that is, Buddhahood,
And who through possession of which, i.e. through possession of the exalted knower of **aspects** (the omniscient mind) **the Subduers**, Arya Buddhas **set forth the varieties** of different teachings which reveal **all the aspects** of the paths of the three vehicles (Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva vehicle).

As mentioned above, since the perfection of wisdom gives rise to Arya beings and eventually to liberation and Buddhahood, it is called the 'Sublime Mother'.
Aryas (Tib.: *'phags pa*) are spiritually highly accomplished beings who have cultivated the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness and have therefore reached the path of seeing, the path of meditation, or the path of no more learning.

MUNDANE PATHS (Paths in the continuums of practitioners who have not yet directly realized emptiness)		ARYA PATHS (Paths in the continuums of those who have directly realized emptiness)		
Path of accumulation	→	Path of preparation	→	Path of seeing → Path of meditation → Path of no more learning

Furthermore, Aryas pertain to one of the four types of Aryas (Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, Arya Bodhisattvas, or Arya Buddhas).

The four types of Aryas

In general, there are three types of practitioners: (1) Hearer practitioners, (2) Solitary Realizer practitioners, and (3) Bodhisattvas.
Both Hearer and Solitary Realizer practitioners have entered the Hinayana path and aspire towards attaining self-liberation. Even though their goal is the same, they differ in the way in which they actualize that goal. Hearer practitioners are Hinayana trainees who strive for Nirvana on the basis of listening to instructions from a teacher, whereas Solitary Realizers practitioners are Hinayana trainees who strive for Nirvana in solitude, without relying as much on a teacher.
Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, do not strive merely to attain liberation but to reach the state of a Buddha.

Arya Hearers

Hearers (Skt.: *Shravaka*, Tib.: *nyan thos*) can be categorized into two types: (1) mundane Hearers and (2) Arya Hearers. Mundane Hearers are Hearer practitioners who have not yet directly realized emptiness and abide on the Hearer path of accumulation or preparation. Arya Hearers are Hearers who have directly realized emptiness and abide on the Hearer path of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning. The Tibetan term for Hearer (*nyan thos*) is a combination of the two Tibetan syllables *listen* and *hear*, and means that Hearers listen to the teachings given by the Buddha and other masters, practice what they have heard, and then cause others to also *hear* those teachings, i.e. teach others what they have learned and understood.
The Tibetan term *nyan thos* is not a literal translation of the Sanskrit term 'Shravaka'. The literal translation of the Sanskrit term is *thob sgrogs* in Tibetan which means 'proclaiming the attained', or *thos sgrogs* which means 'proclaiming the heard'.
Therefore, Hearers proclaim or teach to others whatever personal realizations they have attained, and they proclaim or teach to those aspiring to attain enlightenment whatever Mahayana teachings they have heard (without practicing Mahayana teachings themselves).

Arya Solitary Realizers

Solitary Realizers (Skt.: *Pratyekabuddha*, Tib.: *rang rgyal/rang sangs rgyas*) can also be categorized into two types: (1) mundane Solitary Realizers and (2) Arya Solitary Realizers. Mundane Solitary Realizers

are Solitary Realizer practitioners who have not yet directly realized emptiness and abide on the Solitary Realizer path of accumulation or preparation. Arya Solitary Realizers are Solitary Realizers who have directly realized emptiness and abide on the Solitary Realizer path of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning.

Solitary Realizer practitioners, although also aspiring for self-liberation, are different from Hearers in that they make the following prayers when they enter the Hinayana path:

- "May I be reborn in a land where there is no Buddha performing the various activities, like teaching the Dharma and so forth (here Buddha mainly refers to a founding Buddha)";
- "May I be able to teach the Dharma not verbally but by way of the movements of my body";
- "May I, in my last rebirth in samsara, attain nirvana/self-liberation without relying upon the quintessential instructions of a master."

Arya Bodhisattvas

Bodhisattvas (Tib.: *byang chub sem dpa'* or literally 'Heroes of the Mind of Enlightenment') are Mahayana practitioners who, based on great compassion for all sentient beings, have generated Bodhicitta and thus aspire to attain the state of a Buddha in order to be of the utmost benefit to all sentient beings.

They can also be categorized into: (1) mundane Bodhisattvas and (2) Arya Bodhisattvas. Mundane Bodhisattvas are Mahayana practitioners who abide on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation. Arya Bodhisattvas are Bodhisattvas who abide on the Mahayana path of seeing or meditation. There are no Arya Bodhisattvas who abide on the Mahayana path of no-more-learning, for Aryas who abide on that path are necessarily Arya *Buddhas*.

Please note that Bodhisattvas who have attained the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness are not necessarily Arya Bodhisattvas, for there are Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation who have attained such wisdom. There are Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation who have attained the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness since there are Bodhisattvas who achieved self-liberation and became Hinayana Arhats before they entered the Mahayana path.

However, Bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation or preparation who achieved self-liberation before they entered the Mahayana path are not Arya Bodhisattvas (even though they are both Aryas and Bodhisattvas), for they have not yet reached the Mahayana path of seeing.

Arya Buddhas

There is a difference between an Arya Buddha (Tib.: *sangs rgyas 'phags pa*) and a Buddha (Tib.: *sangs rgyas*). According to the scriptures, an Arya Buddha is necessarily a person whereas a Buddha is not necessarily a person.

This is not the way in which the term 'Buddha' is used in English, but in Tibetan any *kaya*, i.e. any features of an Arya Buddha that are the results of meditation, such as his omniscient mind, his truth of cessation, his physical body, etc. are explained to be Buddhas. However, these features are not Arya *Buddhas*, for they are not living beings. Buddha Shakyamuni, on the other hand, is both a Buddha and an Arya Buddha. He is a Buddha because he is a *Nirmanakaya* or *Emanation body*, and he is an Arya Buddha because he is a fully ordained monk who has overcome afflictive and cognitive obstructions.

Therefore, whoever is an Arya Buddha is necessarily a Buddha whereas whatever is a Buddha is not necessarily an Arya Buddha.

Aryas are supermundane living beings owing to the Arya paths they have cultivated. In general, Arya paths can be categorized into three knowers. These three are described as fulfilling the aspirations of the four Aryas.

The three knowers are:

- (1) Knower of bases
- (2) Knower of paths
- (3) Exalted knower of aspects

(1) Knower of bases

A knower of bases (Tib.: *gzhi shes*) refers to any Arya path in the continuums of Arya Hinayanists – Arya Hearers and Arya Solitary Realizers. The main goal of these Aryas is the complete peace of self-

liberation, and they cultivate the knower of bases because it enables them to overcome afflictive obstructions (obstructions to liberation) and attain "the complete peace of self-liberation". Hence all Hinayana Arya paths (i.e. Hinayana paths of seeing, meditation, and no-more-learning) are necessarily knowers of bases.

But knowers of bases also arise in the continuums of Mahayanists. For instance, the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuums of Arya Bodhisattvas or Arya Buddhas is a knower of bases because it is an Arya path that is *typical of* Hinayana paths (Tib.: *theg dman gyi rtogs rigs su gnas pa*). It is an Arya path that is typical of Hinayana paths because it is the principal object of meditation of Hinayana practitioners. Therefore, the definition of a knower of bases is: a knower in the continuum of an Arya that is typical of Hinayana paths.

'A knower in the continuum of an Arya' and an Arya path are equivalent.

Please note that the wisdom directly realizing emptiness is not only typical of Hinayana paths but also of Mahayana paths. It is typical of Mahayana paths, for it is also the principal object of meditation of Mahayana practitioners.

(2) Knower of paths

A knower of paths (Tib.: *lam shes*) refers to any Arya path in the continuums of Arya Bodhisattvas whose main goal is to help migrating sentient beings. Arya Bodhisattvas cultivate the knower of paths because it enables them to eliminate cognitive obstructions (obstructions to omniscience) and attain "the aim of the world, that is, Buddhahood". But knowers of paths do not merely arise in the continuums of Arya Bodhisattvas, for any path in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is also a knower of paths.

In short, whatever is a Mahayana path of seeing, meditation, or no-more-learning is necessarily a knower of paths. Thus, the definition of a knower of paths is: a knower in the continuum of a Mahayana Arya that is conjoined with special method and wisdom.

'A knower of a Mahayana Arya' and a Mahayana Arya path are equivalent. Special method refers to Bodhicitta and special wisdom to a Mahayanist's wisdom realizing emptiness. Hence, a knower of paths constitutes a Mahayana Arya path that is conjoined or affected by Bodhicitta and the Mahayana wisdom that realizes emptiness.

(3) Exalted Knower of Aspects

An exalted knower of aspects (Tib.: *rnam mkhyen*) refers to any omniscient mind (mental consciousness) in the continuums of Arya Buddhas, the possession of which enables Arya Buddhas to "set forth the varieties of different teachings", enabling them to reveal - according to disciples' interests and predispositions - the different paths of the three vehicles.

The definition of an exalted knower of aspects is: a final exalted wisdom that directly realizes all phenomena.

Another definition that is cited particularly in the **Prajnaparamita** literature is: a final exalted wisdom that directly realizes the ten phenomena, such as Bodhicitta, and so on. Since a single phenomenon cannot have two definitions it is explained that either of the two definitions is correct. Here the ten phenomena constitute the ten topics that characterize the exalted knower of aspects in the first chapter of the **Ornament**.

In brief, knowers of bases arise in the continuums of Arya Hearers, Arya Solitary Realizers, Arya Bodhisattvas, and Arya Buddhas. Knowers of paths do not arise in the continuums of Arya Hearers and Arya Solitary Realizers but in the continuums of Arya Bodhisattvas and Arya Buddhas. And exalted knowers of aspects arise only in the continuums of Arya Buddhas.

Also, an Arya path that is typical of Hinayana paths and manifests in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is both a knower of bases and a knower of paths. However, it is not an exalted knower of aspects since it is not a mental consciousness of an Arya Buddha. On the other hand, an Arya path that is typical of Hinayana paths and manifests in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is all three: a knower of bases, a knower of paths, and an exalted knower of aspects.

However, not all knowers of bases manifest in the continuums of Arya Bodhisattvas and Arya Buddhas. For instance, the awareness that wishes to attain self-liberation only manifests in the continuums of Hearers and Solitary Realizers; it does not arise in the continuums of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Furthermore, not all knowers of paths are knowers of bases. For instance, Bodhicitta or great compassion are not knowers of bases and do not arise in the continuums of Hearers and Solitary Realizers.

Knower of bases:

	Arya Hearers	Arya Solitary Realizers	Arya Bodhisattvas	Arya Buddhas
<i>Knower of bases</i>	Any path in the continuum of an Arya Hearer is necessarily a knower of bases	Any path in the continuum of an Arya Solitary Realizer is necessarily a knower of bases	Any path that is typical of the Hinayana and that manifests in the continuum of an Arya Bodhisattva is necessarily a knower of bases.	Any path that is typical of the Hinayana and that manifests in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is necessarily a knower of bases.

Knower of paths:

	Arya Hearers	Arya Solitary Realizers	Arya Bodhisattvas	Arya Buddhas
<i>Knower of paths</i>			Any path in the continuum of an Arya Bodhisattva is necessarily a knower of paths.	Any path in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is necessarily a knower of paths.

Exalted knower of aspects:

	Arya Hearers	Arya Solitary Realizers	Arya Bodhisattvas	Arya Buddhas
<i>Exalted knower of aspects</i>				Any mental consciousness in the continuum of an Arya Buddha is necessarily an exalted knower of aspects

As mentioned above, the explanations given in this handout are from the point of view of the Prasangika Madhyamika (Middle Way Consequentialist) School, the highest philosophical tenet system. According to this school, all three types of practitioners - Hearer practitioners, Solitary Realizer practitioners, and Bodhisattvas - have to cultivate the meditative equipoise that directly realizes the lack of inherent or true existence in order to eliminate their respective obstructions and reach their respective goals. In other words, Hearer and Solitary Realizer practitioners have to cultivate the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness in order to eliminate afflictive obstructions, that is, the ignorance that perceives inherent or true existence, other afflictions induced by that ignorance, and the seeds of both the foregoing. Bodhisattvas have to cultivate the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness in order to eliminate both afflictive *and* cognitive obstructions. According to the Prasangika School, cognitive obstructions constitute the imprints of the ignorance that perceives inherent existence and the imprints of all other afflictions.

However, according to the Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika School (from the point of view of which the Ornament is traditionally presented), the three types of practitioners have to realize different objects in order to reach their respective goals (i.e. not all of them have to realize emptiness). Hearer practitioners have to cultivate the wisdom that directly realizes the 'lack of a self-sufficient, substantially existent self' in order to eliminate afflictive obstructions and attain the Hearer Nirvana because the ignorance that perceives 'a self-sufficient, substantially existent self' is considered to be the root of cyclic

existence and induces other afflictions, such as anger, attachment, etc. This root ignorance, all the other afflictions, and the seeds of both the foregoing constitute afflictive obstructions.

Solitary Realizer practitioners have to not only eliminate afflictive obstructions but also *coarse* cognitive obstructions. Coarse cognitive obstructions refer to the ignorance that perceives 'subject and object to be different substantial entities' (i.e. that phenomena exist externally) and to the seeds of that ignorance.

Please note that the proponents of this tenet system are similar to the Chittamatra/Mind-Only School in that they assert the lack of external phenomena.

Therefore, Solitary Realizers have to cultivate the wisdom that directly realizes the 'lack of subject and object being different substantial entities' with which they eliminate afflictive obstructions *and* coarse cognitive obstructions.

Bodhisattvas have to cultivate the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness, i.e. the lack of true existence, in order to eliminate afflictive obstructions as well as coarse and *subtle* cognitive obstructions. According to this tenet system, subtle cognitive obstructions refer to the ignorance that perceives true existence as well as the seeds and the imprints of that ignorance.

Furthermore, the proponents of the Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika School assert that a Hearer becomes an Arya when he directly realizes the 'lack of a self-sufficient, substantially existent self' and reaches the Hearer path of seeing, a Solitary Realizer becomes an Arya when he directly realizes the 'lack of subject and object being different substantial entities' and reaches the Solitary Realizer path of seeing, and a Bodhisattva becomes an Arya when he directly realizes emptiness (the lack of true existence) and reaches the Mahayana path of seeing.

Hearers:

	Obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of the Hearer Nirvana	The wisdom that eliminates the obstructions to the Hearer Nirvana
Prasangika Madhyamika	The ignorance that perceives inherent/true existence, all other afflictions induced by that ignorance, and the seeds of both the foregoing are afflictive obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of the Hearer Nirvana.	The wisdom that directly realizes the lack of inherent/true existence eliminates afflictive obstructions.
Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika	The ignorance that perceives 'a self-sufficient, substantially existent self', all other afflictions induced by that ignorance, and the seeds of both the foregoing are afflictive obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of the Hearer Nirvana.	The wisdom that directly realizes the 'lack of a self-sufficient, substantially existent self' eliminates afflictive obstructions.

Solitary Realizers:

	Obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of the Solitary Realizer Nirvana	The wisdom that eliminates the obstructions to the Solitary Realizer Nirvana
Prasangika Madhyamika	The ignorance that perceives inherent/true existence, all other afflictions induced by that ignorance, and the seeds of both the foregoing are afflictive obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of the Solitary Realizer Nirvana.	The wisdom that directly realizes the lack of inherent/true existence eliminates afflictive obstructions.
Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika	The ignorance that perceives 'subject and object being different substantial entities' and the seeds of that ignorance are <i>coarse</i> cognitive obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of the Solitary Realizer Nirvana.	The wisdom that directly realizes the 'lack of subject and object being different substantial entities' eliminates <i>coarse</i> cognitive obstructions.

Bodhisattvas:

	Obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of Buddhahood	The wisdom that eliminates the obstructions to Buddhahood
Prasangika Madhyamika	The imprints of the ignorance that perceives inherent/true existence and the imprints of all other afflictions induced by that ignorance are cognitive obstructions that mainly prevent the attainment of Buddhahood.	The wisdom that directly realizes the lack of inherent/true existence eliminates cognitive obstructions.
Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika	The ignorance that perceives true existence and the seeds of that ignorance are <i>subtle</i> cognitive obstructions that prevent the attainment of Buddhahood.	The wisdom that directly realizes the lack of true existence eliminates <i>subtle</i> cognitive obstructions.

It is important to understand that proponents of both tenet systems assert that there is no common locus between a path that is typical of *Hinayana* method paths (e.g. the wish to attain self-liberation) and a path that is typical of *Mahayana* method paths (e.g. Bodhicitta).

However, the proponents of the Prasangika Madhyamika accept that a path that is typical of *Hinayana* wisdom paths and a path that is typical of *Mahayana* wisdom paths are synonymous, while the proponents of the Yogachara Svatantrika Madhyamika hold that they are contradictory.

Regarding the sequence in which Maitreya prostrates to the three knowers, there is a reason for Maitreya first prostrating to the knower of bases, then to the knower of paths, and lastly to the exalted knower of aspects. Panchen Sonam Drakpa explains in his *Decisive Analysis* that Maitreya's intent is to teach the students of the *Ornament* the order in which to engage in Mahayana practice. The knower of bases is associated with Hinayana practices, i.e. it is typical of Hinayana paths. Therefore, Mahayana trainees must first develop their minds with the practices that are common to the Hinayana, for without those it is impossible to generate great compassion. Without great compassion it is impossible to cultivate Bodhicitta, without Bodhicitta it is impossible to develop the knower of paths, and without the knower of paths it is impossible to attain the exalted knower of aspects. Hence it is important to understand that is not possible to engage in effective Mahayana practice without first building a sound foundation in the practices that are common to the Hinayana/Fundamental Vehicle.

THE PURPOSE FOR COMPOSING THE ORNAMENT

Following the homage, Maitreya explains in two verses the purpose for composing the *Ornament*:

*The paths of the exalted knower of all aspects
Are what the teacher explained here;
That which is not experienced by others,
And has the nature of the ten Dharma activities. [2]*

*The meaning of the sutras is placed within one's mindfulness.
Then those with intelligence will see.
Therefore, "easily realizing"
Is the purpose of this composition. [3]*

The meaning of these two verses is:

[2] **The teacher**, the Buddha, **explained here** in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* **the paths** leading to enlightenment, i.e. the paths leading to **the exalted knower of aspects** - the knower that **has the nature** of or is characterized by the **ten Dharma activities** (the ten topics) and **which is not experienced by others** such as non-Buddhists, Hearers and Solitary Realizers.

[3] **The meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras is placed within the trainee's mindfulness** through repeated study and contemplation. **Then those with intelligence will come to see the meaning of these sutras. Therefore, "easily realizing the meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras" is the purpose of this composition,** the *Ornament for Clear Realization*.

THE SUMMARY OF THE ORNAMENT

The homage and the explanation of the purpose are followed by a summary of the *Ornament* in fifteen verses.

These fifteen verses express the topics of the *Ornament*, which can be summarized into:

- i. the eight clear realizations and
- ii. the seventy topics

The summary of the eight clear realizations

Maitreya summarizes the eight clear realizations in two verses:

The Perfection of Wisdom (Sutras)
Are well explained through the eight clear realizations,
The exalted knower of all aspects, the knower of paths,
Then the knower of all (bases), [4]

Completely clear realization of all aspects,
Reaching the peak, gradualism,
Actual complete enlightenment in a single moment,
And the Dharmakaya are the eight aspects. [5]

The meaning of the two verses is:

In the *Ornament*, the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras are well explained through the eight clear realizations: (1) the exalted knower of all aspects, (2) the knower of paths, (3) the knower of all bases, (4) the completely clear realization of all aspects (Training in Complete Aspects), (5) reaching the peak (Peak Training), (6) gradualism (Gradual Training), (7) actual complete enlightenment in a single moment (Training in a Single Instant), and (8) the resultant Dharmakaya – those eight are the eight aspects, i.e. the eight clear realizations.**

The summary of the seventy topics:

As explained above, each clear realization is further characterized by different topics. Hence, the eight chapters present seventy topics which the *Ornament* summarizes in thirteen verses. The first two of these thirteen verses present the ten topics of the first chapter, which characterize the exalted knower of aspects:

Mind generation, practice instructions,
The fourfold branches of definite distinction,
The foundation of practice -
The natural Dharmadhatu, [6]

The focal objects, the objectives,
Armor-like, activities of engagement,
Accumulation and definite emergence:
These are the exalted knower of all aspects of the Conqueror. [7]

Since the thirteen verses merely list the seventy topics, with more extensive explanation given in the later verses of the *Ornament*, only the first two verses are cited here.

The meaning of the two verses is:

(1) **Mind generation**, i.e. Bodhicitta, (2) Mahayana **practice instructions**, (3) **the fourfold branches of definite distinction**, i.e. the Mahayana path of preparation, (4) **the foundation** of Mahayana **practice** - the **naturally** abiding Buddha nature of **Dharmadhatu**, (5) **the focal objects** of Mahayana practice, (6) **the three great objectives** of Mahayana practice, (7) **armor-like** practice, (8) **activities of engagement**, i.e. engaged practice, (9) practice of **accumulation**, and (10) practice of **definite emergence**. These are the ten topics that characterize **the exalted knower of all aspects of the Conqueror**.

The ten topics that characterize the exalted knower of aspects are:

1. **Bodhicitta** - Bodhicitta is explained first because it is the entryway to the Mahayana path. It refers to a mental consciousness that aspires to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. The moment such a mind is newly generated a practitioner enters the Mahayana path of accumulation.
2. **Mahayana Practice instructions** - Yet aspiring to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings is not enough; one needs to engage in the practice of study, contemplation, and meditation on the Mahayana practice instructions given by the Buddha and other masters.
3. **The Mahayana path of preparation** - Having generated Bodhicitta (and thus entered the Mahayana path of accumulation), having studied, contemplated, and meditated on the two truths, etc. by relying on the Mahayana practice instructions, and having conceptually realized emptiness with an inferential cognizer, the Bodhisattva then enters the Mahayana path of preparation. The path of preparation is attained when the practitioner achieves a union of calm abiding and special insight that realizes emptiness conceptually.
4. **Buddha nature/essence/lineage** - The nature of the mind that engages in Mahayana practice is the mind's *lack of true existence/ inherent existence*. This lack of true/ inherent existence of the mental consciousness is called 'Buddha nature' and serves as the basis for Mahayana practice. Having reached the Mahayana path of accumulation, etc. one is now also able to realize that one possesses Buddha nature.
5. **Objects of focus of Mahayana practice** - Having explained the basis of Mahayana practice, which is Buddha nature, the **Ornament** proceeds to explain the objects of focus of Mahayana practice.
6. **The three great objectives of Mahayana practice** - This topic is concerned with the objectives or purposes of Mahayana practice, i.e. the purpose for studying, contemplating, and meditating on the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras**.
7. **Armor-like practice** - Having discussed the basis, objects of focus, and objectives of Mahayana practice, the **Ornament** subsequently explains the actual practice starting with armor-like practice. Armor-like practice deals with the development of the right motivation, which serves as armor or protection against unfavorable conditions.
8. **Engaged practice** - After the motivation for practice, the engaged practice is explained. Engaged practice is concerned with the development of calm abiding, the six perfections, the Arya paths such as the path of seeing, etc., the four immeasurables and so forth.
9. **Practice of accumulation** - This topic is concerned with the practice of accumulating great merit and great wisdom.
10. **Practice of definite emergence** - This consists of practicing eight different 'definite emergences' such as the practice of the three great objectives, of equally realizing the emptiness of all phenomena, of endlessly working for the benefit of sentient beings, and so forth.

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE ORNAMENT

As mentioned before, the first chapter of the **Ornament** presents the first of the eight clear realizations, the *exalted knower of aspects*. Thus, the first chapter explains the meaning of the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** by way of presenting the omniscient mind. The reason for presenting the omniscient mind in the beginning of the **Ornament** is to generate interest and enthusiasm in the continuums of practitioners. By studying, contemplating, and meditating on the first chapter, practitioners generate faith and the aspiration to attain the result of the Mahayana path – the omniscient mind of a Buddha (i.e. the exalted knower of aspects). This aspiration in turn motivates them to continue to study, contemplate, and meditate on the remaining chapters of the **Ornament**, which expound the variety of different paths that lead to the enlightened state of a Buddha.

However, instead of explaining the *exalted knower of aspects* itself (its definition, division, and so forth), the first chapter presents the *exalted knower of aspects* by way of presenting ten topics that characterize the *exalted knower of aspects*.

Therefore, the question arises, how do the ten topics characterize the omniscient mind of a Buddha? Some of the earlier Tibetan translators assert that the ten topics characterize the exalted knower of aspects by way of being its causes. In other words, by comprehending those ten topics as the causes of the omniscient mind of a Buddha one is effortlessly able to also comprehend the result - the omniscient mind itself.

Lama Tsongkhapa and his followers assert that the ten topics characterize the exalted knower of aspects by way of being its objects. The exalted knower of aspects is omniscient and therefore simultaneously realizes all the ten topics, i.e. realizes all the practices required to attain Buddhahood, making the Buddha the perfect guide to lead sentient beings to enlightenment. Thus, by comprehending the ten topics as the objects of the omniscient mind one is effortlessly able to comprehend the object-possessor - the omniscient mind.

BODHICITTA

The first of the ten topics that characterize the *exalted knower* of aspects is Bodhicitta, which in English is called *Mind of Enlightenment* (Skt.: *Bodhicitta*, Tib.: *byang chub sems*) or *Mind Generation* (Skt.: *Chitta utpada*, Tib.: *sems bskyed*).

Maitreya explains Bodhicitta in three verses. The first verse (verse 19 of the *Ornament*) describes the definition and the two 'limbs' or components (Tib.: *yan lag*) of Bodhicitta:

*Mind Generation is the wish for
Complete enlightenment for the benefit of others.
Just as in the sutra, the one and the other
Are explained briefly and extensively. [19]*

The meaning of the verse is:

The definition of **Mind Generation** or Bodhicitta is: a special mental main mind which is the entry way to the Mahayana path and is concomitant with its assistant aspiration, **the** intense **wish** that focuses on **complete enlightenment for the benefit of others**.

Just as the one (the *enlightenment aspiration*) **and the other** (the *aspiration to benefit others*) are explained **in the** middling **sutra** (the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Twenty Thousand Verses*) likewise they **are explained briefly and extensively** in the short (the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Verses*) and the extensive sutra (the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in One Hundred Thousand Verses*) respectively.

Therefore, the first two lines of the verse 19 present the definition of Bodhicitta, while the third and fourth lines present the two 'limbs' or components of Bodhicitta.

The definition of Bodhicitta

The definition of Bodhicitta is: a special mental main mind (mental consciousness that is a main mind) which is the entry way to the Mahayana path and is concomitant with its assistant aspiration that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of others.

The meaning of the different aspects of the definition:

- *Special*: Bodhicitta is special because it is one of the principal states of awareness required to attain enlightenment
- *It is a main mind*: from the point of view of function, consciousness or awareness can be divided into a main mind and mental factors. Every main mind is concomitant with or accompanied by various different mental factors (i.e. mental functions). Bodhicitta itself is a main mind, for even though it is dependent on its concomitant mental factors, it is nonetheless a main mind the principal function of which is to apprehend its object
- *It is a mental consciousness*: of the two, sense and mental consciousnesses, Bodhicitta is a mental consciousness because it is cultivated in dependence on meditation.
- *It is the entry-way to the Mahayana*: It is the entry-way to the Mahayana since Bodhicitta is the criterion that determines whether or not one has entered the Mahayana path and has become a Bodhisattva. Therefore, the first moment of the Mahayana path of accumulation is marked by the generation of the first moment of Bodhicitta.
- *It is concomitant with its assistant aspiration*: Even though Bodhicitta itself is a main mind it is concomitant with or accompanied by different mental factors. One of the principal mental factors Bodhicitta is concomitant with is the mental factor of aspiration
- *Its assistant aspiration focuses on complete enlightenment*: the aspiration that is concomitant with Bodhicitta in the continuums of Bodhisattvas focuses on their own complete enlightenment in that it

aspires to complete enlightenment. The aspiration that is concomitant with Bodhicitta in the continuums of Buddhas focuses on complete enlightenment in that it *realizes* complete enlightenment. Even though Buddhas possess aspiration and the *function* of aspiration, their aspiration does not aspire to anything anymore since they have attained all the positive qualities a living being can possibly attain, and since an awareness that aspires must be a conceptual consciousness whereas a Buddha has overcome all conceptual consciousnesses.

Therefore, Bodhicitta is a special awareness that is the result of intense and prolonged meditation. It is driven by great compassion for all sentient beings, arises spontaneously, and profoundly affects the actions of body, speech, and mind of those who have cultivated it in their mental continuum.

The two limbs/components of Bodhicitta

Bodhicitta has two components, one which is its cause and the other which is its concomitant mental factor:

- a) The aspiration to benefit others
- b) The enlightenment aspiration

The aspiration to benefit others

The *aspiration to benefit others* (Tib.: *gzhan don 'dun pa*) is a mental factor that focuses on the benefit of others. Particularly in the continuum of a Mahayana practitioner, it is a mental factor that *aspires* to the benefit of others.

Here '*others*' refers to sentient beings other than oneself, whereas '*benefit*' is of two types: (1) temporary benefit, which refers to the liberation of an Arhat and (2) ultimate benefit, which refers to the enlightenment of a Buddha

The *aspiration to benefit others* is a component of Bodhicitta because it constitutes the mental factor of aspiration that is one of Bodhicitta's main causes. It therefore precedes the cultivation of Bodhicitta and arises as a result of meditating on the two principal methods for generating Bodhicitta: (1) the 'Six Causes and One Effect Instruction' (understanding that all sentient beings have been one's mother, recognizing their kindness, and so forth) and (2) 'Equalizing and Exchanging Self for Others'. The main focus of the *aspiration to benefit others* is other sentient beings' liberation from suffering in general and their enlightenment in particular. Thus, the aspiration that must precede the *Mind of Enlightenment* is a mental factor that aspires to other sentient beings' liberation from suffering and complete enlightenment.

The enlightenment aspiration

The *enlightenment aspiration* refers to the above mentioned mental factor concomitant with Bodhicitta that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. It arises as a *result* of wishing for the liberation and enlightenment of all sentient beings, i.e. it arises as a result of the *aspiration to benefit others*.

The enlightenment of a Buddha refers to two bodies or *kayas*: (1) the *Dharmakaya* (*Truth-body*, Tib.: *Chos sku*) and (2) the *Rupakaya* (*Form-body*, Tib.: *gzugs sku*). The *Dharmakaya* constitutes the omniscient mind, the cessation of cognitive obstructions, and so forth. The *Rupakaya*, on the other hand, refers to an actual Arya Buddha who gives teachings and manifests in whichever way is most beneficial to sentient beings. Since sentient beings cannot communicate with the omniscient mind or the cessations of a Buddha, it is the *Rupakaya* that is most beneficial to them. Thus, when aspiring to attain enlightenment - as a result of aspiring to benefit sentient beings - Mahayana practitioners mainly aspire to attain the *Rupakaya* of a Buddha.

In short, the *aspiration to benefit others* must precede the generation of Bodhicitta and thus the generation of the *enlightenment aspiration*, because the main objective of a practitioner of the Mahayana is the benefit of others, i.e. others' liberation and enlightenment.

Hence, based on the 'Sevenfold Cause and Effect Method' or 'Equalizing and Exchanging Self for Others', practitioners first generate great compassion for all sentient beings. Then they cultivate the *aspiration to benefit others*, that is, the aspiration that wishes for all sentient beings to attain liberation and Buddhahood. However, since one is able to lead others to enlightenment only *after* one has become a Buddha oneself, after generating the *aspiration to benefit others* practitioners generate the aspiration that focuses on their own enlightenment (i.e. the *enlightenment aspiration*). Hence, the aspiration to

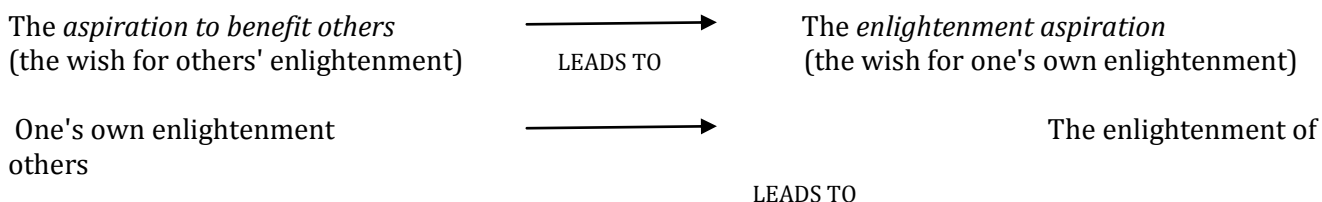
attain enlightenment oneself arises from the aspiration that seeks the enlightenment of all sentient beings and thus arises in dependence on the latter.

Furthermore, of the two objectives - others' enlightenment and one's own enlightenment - others' enlightenment is the principal or immediate objective whereas one's own enlightenment is merely the secondary or indirect aim.

An analogy for this is someone having the wish to get a glass in order to drink some water. Drinking water is that person's principal or immediate aim. In order to be able to drink the water, he then wishes for a glass. Getting the glass is his secondary or indirect objective, for the glass merely serves as the means to accomplish his principal aim of drinking water.

Therefore, wishing for one's own enlightenment compares with the wish to get a glass, for it merely serves as the means to accomplish others' welfare.

However, even though the aspiration for others' enlightenment must precede the aspiration to one's own, in order to fulfill the two aspirations, one's own enlightenment must precede the enlightenment of others.



The three sutras referred to in the third and fourth lines of the first verse of the *Ornament's* three verses on Bodhicitta are the extensive, middling, and short **Perfection of Wisdom Sutras** (i.e. the extensive, middling, and short Sublime Mothers). As mentioned before, the extensive sutra refers to the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in One Hundred Thousand Verses**, the middling sutra to the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Twenty Thousand Verses**, and the short sutra to the **Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Verses**.

Thus, Maitreya says in these two lines that the two components of Bodhicitta, the *aspiration to benefit others* and the *enlightenment aspiration* are explained in the three principal sutric sources of the **Ornament**.

Bodhicitta's category from the point of view of similes

Having presented the definition and the two components of Bodhicitta, Maitreya sets forth twenty-two different types of Bodhicitta that are described by way of twenty-two similes. The **Ornament** enumerates the twenty-two similes in two verses (verses 20 and 21):

*As for this: earth, gold, moon, fire,
Treasure, jewel mine, ocean,
Vajra, mountain, medicine, spiritual friend,
Wish-fulfilling jewel, sun, song [20]*

*King, store-house, great path,
Riding mount, spring,
pleasant sound, river, and cloud.
Thus, these are the twenty-two aspects [21]*

The meaning of the two verses is:

As for this, the category by way of similes, sets forth twenty-two different types of Bodhicitta: (1) **earth**-like Bodhicitta, (2) **gold**-like Bodhicitta, (3) **moon**-like Bodhicitta, (4) **fire**-like Bodhicitta, (5) great **treasure**-like Bodhicitta, (6) **jewel mine**-like Bodhicitta, (7) great **ocean**-like Bodhicitta, (8) **Vajra**-like Bodhicitta, (9) king of **mountain**-like Bodhicitta, (10) **medicine**-like Bodhicitta, (11) **spiritual friend**-like Bodhicitta, (12) **wish-fulfilling jewel**-like Bodhicitta, (13) **sun**-like Bodhicitta, (14) pleasant Dharma **song**-like Bodhicitta, (15) great **king**-like Bodhicitta, (16) **store house**-like Bodhicitta, (17) **great path**-like Bodhicitta, (18) **riding mount**-like Bodhicitta, (19) **spring**-like Bodhicitta, (20) **pleasant sound**-like Bodhicitta, (21) **river**-like Bodhicitta, (22) **cloud**-like Bodhicitta. **Thus, these are the twenty-two different aspects** of Bodhicitta.

The twenty-two types of Bodhicitta that the twenty-two similes represent are:

(1) Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration, (2) Bodhicitta endowed with resolve, (3) Bodhicitta endowed with special attitude, (4) Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers, (5) Bodhicitta endowed with generosity, (6) Bodhicitta endowed with ethics, (7) Bodhicitta endowed with patience, (8) Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort, (9) Bodhicitta endowed with concentration, (10) Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom, (11) Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means, (12) Bodhicitta endowed with prayer, (13) Bodhicitta endowed with power, (14) Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom, (15) Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance, (16) Bodhicitta endowed with merit and exalted wisdom, (17) Bodhicitta endowed with the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment, (18) Bodhicitta endowed with compassion and special insight, (19) Bodhicitta endowed with retention and confidence, (20) Bodhicitta endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma, (21) Bodhicitta endowed with the one path traveled, and (22) Bodhicitta concomitant with the truth body which emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings.

Next follows a detailed explanation of the twenty-two types of Bodhicitta and their similes. Please note that the former types of Bodhicitta are the causes of the latter types.

1. Earth-like Bodhicitta

Earth-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the small Mahayana path of accumulation. *Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration* is like the earth because just as the earth is the foundation for houses, crops, etc., likewise *Bodhicitta endowed with aspiration* serves as the basis from which all wholesome qualities can grow and all higher paths are induced.

2. Gold-like Bodhicitta

Gold-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with resolve*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the middling path of accumulation. *Bodhicitta endowed with resolve* is like refined gold because just as refined gold's nature does not change even after being cut, rubbed and burned likewise *Bodhicitta endowed with resolve* cannot degenerate anymore. This means that once Bodhisattvas reach the middling path of accumulation and cultivate *gold-like Bodhicitta* their Bodhicitta, and consequently their Mahayana path can no longer degenerate.

3. Moon-like Bodhicitta

Moon-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the special attitude*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the great path of accumulation. *Bodhicitta endowed with the special attitude* is like the waxing moon because just as the new moon waxes until it is full, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with the special attitude* a Bodhisattva's Dharma qualities increase continuously. Those Dharma qualities are, for instance, the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment (the four mindfulnesses, etc.). The reason for such increase is that on the great path of accumulation Bodhisattvas cultivate a special meditative stabilization called '*Meditative Stability of Continuous Dharma*', which enables them to directly perceive the Nirmanakaya/Emanation bodies of Buddhas in distant places and receive teachings from them.

4. Fire-like Bodhicitta

Fire-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the path of preparation. *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers* is like fire because with *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers* Bodhisattvas "start to burn the firewood of obstructions to the three exalted knowers".

Bodhisattvas reach the path of preparation when they generate the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness conceptually. With the attainment of this union conjoined with *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers*, Bodhisattvas start to undermine the obstructions to omniscience and in this way the obstructions to the attainment of the three exalted knowers of a Buddha. The three exalted knowers are the 'knower of bases', 'the knower of paths', and the 'exalted knower of aspects' in the continuum of a Buddha. Please note that Bodhicitta on the path of preparation is called *Bodhicitta endowed with training in the similitude of the three knowers* because Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation, who did not

become Hinayana Arhats before they entered the Mahayana paths, have only *similitudes* of the three knowers in their continuums. They have only similitudes of the three knowers in their continuums because they will only generate the first two of the three knowers - the knower of bases and the knower of paths - once they reach the path of seeing (i.e. the first Bodhisattva bhumi) and the last of the three knowers - the exalted knower of aspects - once they reach full enlightenment.

5. Great treasure-like Bodhicitta

Great treasure-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with generosity*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the first Bodhisattva bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with generosity* is like a treasure because it satisfies sentient beings through resources, etc. Even though Bodhisattvas engage in the practice of the six or ten perfections on all four Bodhisattva paths (i.e. from the Mahayana path of accumulation to the Mahayana path of meditation), on the first Bodhisattva bhumi they engage especially in the practice of the perfection of generosity. Bodhisattvas reach the first bhumi (and the path of seeing) once they realize emptiness directly. When they arise from the meditative absorption realizing emptiness directly, they enter the subsequent attainment period of the Mahayana path of seeing. During that period they especially engage in the practice of the perfection of generosity. Therefore, on the first bhumi Bodhisattvas obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of generosity; they are able to easily give away their body and to place others in the practice of generosity.

6. Jewel mine-like Bodhicitta

Jewel mine-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with ethics*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the second bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with ethics* is like a jewel mine because with *Bodhicitta endowed with ethics* Bodhisattvas obtain excellent qualities. Bodhisattvas on the second bhumi engage especially in the practice of the perfection of ethics/morality. Due to the emphasis on controlling and purifying themselves Bodhisattvas on this bhumi become the source of many great qualities that are compared to a jewel mine providing great riches. Furthermore, on the second bhumi, Bodhisattvas do not even dream about engaging in non-ethical conduct; they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of ethics and are able to place others in the practice.

7. Great ocean-like Bodhicitta

Great ocean-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with patience*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the third Bodhisattva bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with patience* is like a great ocean because just as a great ocean is not disturbed when objects are thrown into it, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with patience* Bodhisattvas are not swayed or affected by disturbing factors such as aggression and suffering. Bodhisattvas on the third bhumi especially engage in the practice of the perfection of patience. Therefore, they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of patience and are able to place others in the practice.

8. Vajra-like Bodhicitta

Vajra-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the fourth bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort* is like a vajra because just as a vajra has the quality of indestructibility likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with joyous effort* a Bodhisattva's resolve is indestructible. Bodhisattvas on the fourth bhumi emphasize the practice of the perfection of joyous effort. Therefore they do not become discouraged or depressed by any obstacles they encounter; they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of joyous effort and are able to place others in the practice.

9. King of mountain-like Bodhicitta

King of mountain-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with concentration*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the fifth bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with concentration* is like the king of mountains because just as the king of mountains possesses great solidity, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with concentration* a Bodhisattva's mind is very firm and stable. Bodhisattvas on the fifth bhumi emphasize the practice of the perfection of concentration. Therefore, their minds remain unmoved by distracting objects; they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of concentration and are able to place others in the practice.

10. Medicine-like Bodhicitta

Medicine-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the sixth bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom* is like medicine because just as medicine pacifies illnesses, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of wisdom* Bodhisattvas are able to pacify the illness of afflictive and cognitive obstructions. Bodhisattvas on the sixth bhumi especially engage in the practice of the perfection of wisdom. Therefore, they are able to enter into and arise from an absorption that perceives a cessation within the shortest amount of time in which an action can be completed. Further, they obtain a special confidence in the practice of the perfection of wisdom and are able to place others in the practice.

11. Spiritual friend-like Bodhicitta

Spiritual friend-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the seventh bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means* is like a virtuous spiritual friend because just as a virtuous spiritual friend never gives up seeking the welfare of sentient beings likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with skillful means* Bodhisattvas enhance their mastery and attain confidence in skillful means. Thus, they never forsake the welfare of a single sentient being.

12. Wish-fulfilling jewel-like Bodhicitta

Wish-fulfilling jewel-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with prayer*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the eighth bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with prayer* is like a wish-fulfilling jewel because just as a wish-fulfilling jewel actualizes all material dreams and aspirations, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with prayer* Bodhisattvas possess the five clairvoyances and are able to actualize many of their prayers and aspirations concerning the welfare of sentient beings.

13. Sun-like Bodhicitta

Sun-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with power*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the ninth bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with power* is like the sun because just as the sun shines equally on everything and just as it ripens crops etc., likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with power* Bodhisattvas obtain the four means of gathering disciples, which enables them to gradually lead trainees to the practice of the perfections and ripen their continuums. The four means of gathering disciples are: (1) giving necessities such as food, drink, clothes and so forth, (2) speaking pleasantly, (3) giving teachings according to disciples' needs, and (4) practicing in accordance with what one teaches.

14. Pleasant Dharma song-like Bodhicitta

Pleasant Dharma song-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the tenth bhumi. *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom* is like a pleasant Dharma song because just as a pleasant Dharma song inspires those who hear it, likewise with *Bodhicitta endowed with the perfection of exalted wisdom* Bodhisattvas, having trained in the 'Four Specific Understandings', greatly inspire trainees through teaching the Dharma.

The 'Four Specific Understandings' (four ways in which Bodhisattvas know the distinct features, characteristics and states of phenomena) are: (1) specific perfect understanding of Dharma, (2) specific perfect understanding of the meaning, (3) specific perfect understanding of definitive words, and (4) specific perfect understanding of confidence.

The following five types of Bodhicitta pertain to all three pure bhumis, the eighth, ninth and tenth bhumis. As before, the former types are the causes of the latter types:

15. Great king-like Bodhicitta

King-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance*, which refers to Bodhicitta on the three pure bhumis. *Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance* is like a great king because just as a great king accomplishes the welfare of his subjects through his power and status, likewise Bodhisattvas with *Bodhicitta endowed with clairvoyance* obtain great power through clairvoyance. Owing to the power of their clairvoyance their realizations do not degenerate and they are able to accomplish the welfare of sentient beings in the numerous worlds of the ten directions.

16. Store house-like Bodhicitta

Store house-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* endowed with merit and exalted wisdom, which refers to *Bodhicitta* on the three pure bhumis. *Bodhicitta* endowed with merit and exalted wisdom is like a store house from which wealth can be distributed because with *Bodhicitta* endowed with merit and exalted wisdom Bodhisattvas possess the treasury of the two great collections of merit and exalted wisdom.

17. Great path-like Bodhicitta

Great path-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* endowed with the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment, which refers to *Bodhicitta* on the three pure bhumis. *Bodhicitta* endowed with the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment is like a great path or highway because all Arya Bodhisattvas of the three times have traveled and will travel the path of the practices of the thirty-seven harmonies of enlightenment.

18. Riding mount-like Bodhicitta

Riding mount-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* endowed with compassion and special insight, which refers to *Bodhicitta* on the three pure bhumis. *Bodhicitta* endowed with compassion and special insight is like a riding mount because just as a riding mount takes its rider to his destination, likewise with *Bodhicitta* endowed with compassion and special insight Bodhisattvas are taken to full enlightenment. In order to reach full enlightenment, Bodhisattvas must avoid the extreme of Samsara and the extreme of Nirvana/solitary peace. Thus, by cultivating special insight Bodhisattvas overcome Samsara and by cultivating compassion they avoid Nirvana.

19. Spring-like Bodhicitta

Spring-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* endowed with retention and confidence, which refers to *Bodhicitta* on the three pure bhumis. *Bodhicitta* endowed with retention and confidence is like a spring because just as a spring spouts water and is inexhaustible, likewise with *Bodhicitta* endowed with retention and confidence Bodhisattvas are able to retain the Dharma without exhaustion. By means of retention Bodhisattvas are able to retain previously heard and unheard Dharmas and by means of confidence they are able to retain them inexhaustibly.

The last three types of *Bodhicitta* pertain to three Buddha bhumis. (Please note that the first of those three types actually manifests in the continuums of sentient beings. Nonetheless it is explained to *pertain* to the Buddha bhumi):

20. Pleasant sound-like Bodhicitta

Pleasant sound-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma, which refers to *Bodhicitta* at the end of the continuum as a sentient being. *Bodhicitta* endowed with a festival of the four seals of Dharma is like a pleasant sound because with this mind, Bodhisattvas pleasantly proclaim the Dharma of the four seals to those aspiring to liberation. Even though Bodhisattvas at the end of the continuum as sentient beings abide in the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness and are thus unable to teach the Dharma, they send out numerous emanations who teach.

21. River-like Bodhicitta

River-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* endowed with the one path traveled, which refers to *Bodhicitta* in the continuum of a Buddha who has newly attained enlightenment. *Bodhicitta* endowed with the one path traveled is like a river because just as a river flows effortlessly, indiscriminately and continuously, likewise with *Bodhicitta* endowed with the one path traveled Buddhas effortlessly, indiscriminately and continuously work for the benefit of sentient beings.

22. Cloud-like Bodhicitta

Cloud-like Bodhicitta represents *Bodhicitta* concomitant with the truth body that emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings, which refers to *Bodhicitta* in the continuums of Buddhas who emanate a supreme Nirmanakaya/emanation body. *Bodhicitta* concomitant with the truth body that emanates the twelve enlightened deeds and benefits sentient beings is like a cloud because it enables Buddhas to rain down the twelve enlightened deeds.

The twelve enlightened deeds are (1) descent from Tushita pure realm, (2) entering the womb of his mother, (3) taking birth, (4) displaying his skill in the worldly arts, (5) enjoying the company of his wife, (6) becoming a monk, (7) practicing austerity, (8) meditating under the Bodhi tree, (9) defeating Mara, (10) attaining full enlightenment, (11) turning the wheel of Dharma, and (12) passing away.

This completes the presentation Bodhicitta. Next follows a presentation of **Mahayana practice instructions**, which is the second of the ten topics of the *Ornament's* first chapter.

MAHAYANA PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS

As mentioned above, aspiring to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, i.e. cultivating Bodhicitta is not enough; trainees need to engage in the practice of study, contemplation, and meditation on the Mahayana practice instructions given by the Buddha and other masters.

Maitreya's **Ornament** sets forth ten Mahayana practice instructions which expound ten different topics. The ten topics are:

1. The two truths
2. The four noble truths
3. The three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha)
4. Diligence/enthusiastic effort/perseverance of non-involvement
5. Diligence/enthusiastic effort/perseverance of tirelessness
6. Diligence/enthusiastic effort/perseverance of thoroughly applying oneself to the path of practice
7. Five sublime eyes
8. Six clairvoyances
9. Path of seeing
10. Path of meditation

The **Ornament for Clear Realization** describes the ten topics of the ten Mahayana practice instructions in two verses:

*Practice, the truths,
The three jewels such as the Buddha,
Non-involvement, tirelessness,
Thoroughly upholding the path, [22]*

*The five sublime eyes, clairvoyance's
Six qualities and what are called "the paths of seeing
And meditation": these practice instructions
Should be known as having a tenfold character. [23]*

The meaning of the two verses is:

Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation should now listen, contemplate and meditate on the Mahayana practice instructions. This will enhance their practice and their progress on the path to enlightenment.

These practice instructions should be known as having a tenfold character since they describe the following ten topics:

1. The two truths: the two truths are explained in order to understand the nature and the aspect of **practice**
2. The four noble truths: **the** four noble **truths** are the focus of practice
3. The three Jewels: going for refuge to **the three jewels such as the Buddha** and so forth serves as the basis of one's practice
4. The diligence of non-involvement: the diligence of **non-involvement** counteracts the laziness of engaging in non-virtuous actions and assists practitioners in stabilizing their practice
5. The diligence of tirelessness: the diligence of **tirelessness** counteracts the laziness of sloth/procrastination and assists practitioners in increasing their practice

6. The diligence of thoroughly upholding the path of practice: the diligence of **thoroughly upholding the path** of practice counteracts the laziness of self-contempt/faintheartedness and assists practitioners in averting the deterioration of their practice
7. The five sublime eyes: **the five sublime eyes** are special powers that practitioners need in order to become more self-sufficient
8. The six clairvoyances: **clairvoyance's six qualities**, i.e. the six types of clairvoyance, are needed in order to quickly complete the accumulation of merit
9. The path of seeing: practitioners on the **path of seeing** have newly cultivated the meditative absorption directly realizing emptiness. The principal function of this meditative absorption is to permanently eliminate the *intellectually acquired* ignorance etc (i.e. the objects of elimination of the path of seeing).
10. The path of meditation: practitioners on the **path of meditation** have achieved the cessation of the intellectually acquired ignorance etc. and their meditative absorption directly realizing emptiness now eliminates the *innate* ignorance etc. (i.e. the objects of elimination of the path of meditation).

The first three topics (the two truths, the four noble truths, and the three Jewels) are from the point of view of practice itself; the next three topics (the three types of diligence) are from the point of view of avoiding the manifestation of negativities in the continua of practitioners; the following two topics (the five sublime eyes and the six clairvoyances) are from the point of view of increasing practitioners' qualities, and the last two topics (the path of seeing and the path of meditation) are from the point of view of irreversibly eliminating negativities in the continua of practitioners.

This completes the presentation of the Mahayana practice instructions. As an auxiliary topic to the third of the ten topics of Mahayana practice instructions (the three Jewels), Maitreya then expounds on the Sangha Jewel by setting forth the **Twenty Sangha**.

THE TWENTY SANGHA

Having revealed the ten topics of the Mahayana practice instructions, particularly the three objects of refuge, the three Jewels, next follows an extensive presentation of the Sangha Jewel. The Sangha Jewel here refers to the Sangha in the strictest sense, that is, it refers to Arya beings who have directly realized the lack of true existence. Therefore, the extensive presentation of the Sangha Jewel is in fact an extensive presentation of different types of Aryas.

The *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in One Hundred Thousand Verses* lists 48 Sangha. As it is difficult to understand the 48 types they are condensed into 20 types. The twenty Sangha represent a classification of Hinayana Aryas (i.e. chiefly Hearer Aryas) who differ in terms of the realms they are reborn in, their attainments, the number of lives remaining before they attain the state of a foe-destroyer, and so on. They are also called the metaphorical Sangha (Tib.: *mtshon byed dge 'dun*) because they illustrate particular Mahayana Aryas. The Mahayana Aryas illustrated here are called the 'actual' Sangha (Tib.: *don gyi dge 'dun*) - 'actual' in the sense that they are the Sangha that is illustrated.

Maitreya's **Ornament** sets forth the twenty Sangha in two verses:

*Weak and sharp mental faculty;
Believers-by-faith, attainers-by-seeing; from type to type;
One obstacle; intermediate state and upon rebirth,
[Compositional] factor and without [compositional] factor; proceeding to Not Low,[24]
Three jumpers; eventually proceeding to the Peak of Cyclic Existence,
Destroyed attachment to form: pacifying
[During] the Dharma of seeing, actualizing a body;
And the rhinoceros are the twenty.[25]*

According to the eighth century Indian scholar Haribhadra, the **Ornament** reveals seventeen types of Sangha explicitly, and three types implicitly.

The meaning of the two verses of the **Ornament** is:

The twenty Sangha are: (1) approachers to the result of stream-enterer who are of **weak mental faculty**, (2) approachers to the result of stream-enterer who are of **sharp mental faculty**, (3) stream enterers born **from celestial type to [celestial] type**, (4) stream enterers born **from human type to [human] type**, (5) approachers to the result of once-returner who are either **believers-by-faith** or **attainers-by-Dharma**, (6) once-returner [who have] one life, **one obstacle**, (7) approachers to the result of non-returner, (8) non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the **intermediate state**, (9) non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the **birth state**, (10) non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond with a compositional **factor**, (11) non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond **without** a compositional **factor**, (12) - (14) the **three types of jumpers** who are non-returners who progress to a higher [level] by eventually **proceeding to the Not Low Level**, (15) - (16) non- returners who will **pacify [during] the Dharma of seeing** and non-returners who will **actualize a body** - in this case they are both non-returners who have **destroyed attachment to the Form Realm**, called, "those who **eventually proceed to the Peak of Cyclic Existence**", and (17) and rhinoceros like solitary realizers. These are the seventeen types of Sangha who are revealed explicitly.

The three types of Sangha who are revealed implicitly are: (18) simple abiders in the result of stream-enterer, (19) simple abiders in the result once-returner, and (20) approachers to the result foe-destroyer.

Therefore, the Twenty Sangha are:

1. Approachers to the result of stream-enterer who are of weak mental faculty
2. Approachers to the result of stream-enterer who are of sharp mental faculty
3. Stream enterers born from celestial type to [celestial] type
4. Stream enterers born from human type to [human] type
5. Approachers to the result of once returner
6. Once returners [who have] one life, one obstacle
7. Approachers to the result of non-returner
8. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the intermediate state
9. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond in the birth state
10. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond with a compositional factor
11. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and go beyond without a compositional factor
12. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and who are jumpers
13. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and who are half jumpers
14. Non-returners who will proceed to the Form Realm and transmigrate to all abodes
15. Non-returners who will pacify [during] the Dharma of seeing and who have eliminated attachment to the Form Realm (i.e. attained a formless absorption)
16. Non-returners who will actualize a body and attain Nirvana in the Peak of Cyclic Existence Level
17. Rhinoceros-like solitary realizers
18. Simple abiders in the result of stream-enterer
19. Simple abiders in the result of once-returner
20. Approachers to the result of foe-destroyer

This completes the summary of the verses of the **Ornament** we discussed during previous courses. Next follows an extensive description of the first topics of this year's spring course, the **Mahayana path of preparation**.

THE MAHAYANA PATH OF PREPARATION

The following presentation is according to Panchen Sonam Drakpa's **General Meaning** which is a commentary on Gyaltsab je's **Ornament of the Essence**. The **Ornament of the Essence**, in turn, is a commentary on **Clarifying the Meaning**, a short and precise text composed by the eighth century Master Haribhadra and, as mentioned before, considered to be one of the best Indian commentaries on Maitreya's **Ornament**.